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Message Text

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NAVSUPPACT NAPLES

S E C R E T STATE 153295

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, IT,

SUBJECT: HOMEPORTING DESTROYER TENDER IN NAPLES

REFS: (A) STATE 054089
(B) ROME 2144
(C) STATE 26968

CINCUSNAVEUR, USCINCEUR, USDOCOSOUTH FOR POLADS

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1. IN STUDYING THE NAVY PROPOSAL TO RETURN TO CONCEPT OF

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ROTATION OF DESTROYER TENDERS TO MEDITERRANEAN WITH NAPLES
CONTINUING AS PRINCIPAL PORT BUT WITHOUT PRESENCE OF
FAMILIES, THE QUESTIONS AND ISSUES RAISED BY THE EMBASSY
HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY CONSIDERED; OUR THOUGHTS FOLLOW.

2. THE MISSION OF THE SIXTH FLEET REQUIRES THE SURFACE
SHIPS SERVED BY THE DESTROYER TENDER TO BE ABLE ADAPT TO
SUDDEN CHANGES IN SCHEDULE. THE DESTROYER TENDER WILL
CONTINUE TO SPEND THE GREATEST AMOUNT OF ITS IN-PORT
TIME IN NAPLES WHETHER OR NOT FAMILIES ARE PRESENT, BUT
THE NAVY HAS DETERMINED THAT IT IS AN IMPORTANT ADVANTAGE
FOR THIS TENDER TO BE ABLE AT ANY TIME TO GO AND REMAIN
WHEREVER HER SUPPORT IS MOST NEEDED WITHOUT HAVING TO
CONSIDER THE POTENTIAL OR ACTUAL IMPACT ON THE FAMILIES

IN NAPLES AND THEIR MORALE. A ROTATING DESTROYER
TENDER, MOREOVER, CAN BE FITTED OUT IN CONUS WITH MOST
OF THE REPAIR PARTS, EQUIPMENT, AND MATERIAL NEEDED FOR
A SIX-MONTH DEPLOYMENT, THUS REDUCING THE SEPARATE
SUPPLY EFFORT REQUIRED TO SUPPORT A TENDER HOMEPORTED
OVERSEAS. THE PURPOSE OF THE NAVY PROPOSAL IS THEREFORE
TO PROVIDE THE SIXTH FLEET WITH A DESTROYER TENDER MORE
READY IN ALL RESPECTS TO PROVIDE THE FLEXIBLE OPERATIONAL
SUPPORT THE FLEET REQUIRES TO MEET ITS NATO-RELATED
GOALS WHILE TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE AVAILABLE TENDER
ASSETS, THE OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE FLEET, AND
THE NEED TO MINIMIZE COSTS WHERE POSSIBLE.

3. IN THE CASE OF THE SUBMARINE TENDER IN LA MADDALENA,
DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES APPLY. THE NAVY DOES NOT
HAVE THE RESOURCES TO DEPLOY A DIFFERENT SUBMARINE TENDER
TO THE MEDITERRANEAN EVERY SIX MONTHS, AND THE NATURE
AND LEVEL OF ATTACK SUBMARINE OPERATIONS IN THE
MEDITERRANEAN NORMALLY DO NOT REQUIRE THE TENDER
TO MOVE TO OTHER PORTS. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE
ADVANTAGE LIES IN KEEPING A SUBMARINE TENDER IN A
SINGLE LOCATION FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD. IN THE INTEREST
OF CREW MORALE, THIS WEIGHS HEAVILY IN FAVOR OF
HOMEPORTING WITH FAMILIES PRESENT. ADDED COSTS AND
RESUPPLY EFFORTS ARE ACCEPTABLE BECAUSE THE NAVY HAS
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NO VIABLE ALTERNATIVE FOR PROVIDING THE CONTINUING
TENDER SUPPORT NEEDED TO SUSTAIN ATTACK SUBMARINE
OPERATIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

4. THE IRREVERSIBILITY OF RELINQUISHING PRIVILEGES
IN ITALY IS RECOGNIZED. EXCEPT FOR THE ADDITIONAL
FACTOR OF THE PRESENCE OF DEPENDENTS, THE EXCHANGE OF
LETTERS IN 1971 IN ESSENCE FORMALIZED THE HOMEPORTING

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OF A DESTROYER TENDER IN NAPLES THAT HAS BEEN IN EFFECT FOR OVER TWENTY YEARS. IT APPEARS MOST APPROPRIATE, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE EMBASSY, TO LEAVE THE HOMEPORTING AGREEMENT IN EFFECT. THIS WILL PRESERVE THE DESTROYER TENDER BERTH AND PRESERVE ACCESS TO NAPLES FOR NPW. TIMELY LOW-KEY NOTIFICATION OF APPROPRIATE ITALIAN AUTHORITIES OF THE DEPARTURE OF THE DEPENDENTS APPEARS NECESSARY, HOWEVER, SINCE RELATED PERSONNEL ACTIONS CANNOT BE KEPT FROM PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE BEYOND THE END OF CALENDAR 1975.

5. CINCUSNAVEUR HAS INDICATED THAT THE WITHDRAWAL OF APPROXIMATELY 400 USS PIEDMONT DEPENDENTS WILL REQUIRE MINOR ADJUSTMENTS IN NAPLES IN SCHOOL LOADING AND OTHER DEPENDENT SUPPORT BUT THAT THE RELATIVELY SMALL NUMBERS INVOLVED WILL HAVE LITTLE EFFECT ON THE OVERALL SCOPE OF

NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITIES. HE ALSO ESTIMATES THAT THE IMPACT ON THE LOCAL LABOR SITUATION WILL BE MINIMAL SINCE NO ITALIAN NATIONALS ARE EMPLOYED IN DIRECT SUPPORT OF THE TENDER AND SINCE NO REDUCTION IN DEPENDENT RELATED SUPPORT FUNCTIONS IS ANTICIPATED.

6. THE DESTROYER TENDER IS A SEPARATE ISSUE ALSO FROM THE MOVE OF FLEET TACTICAL SUPPORT SQUADRON TWENTY-FOUR (VR-24) TO SIGONELLA AND THE POSSIBLE LOCATION OF THE FAMILIES OF A CARRIER GROUP COMMANDER'S STAFF IN NAPLES (SUBJECT OF A SEPARATE CABLE), AND THE DESTROYER TENDER ISSUE SHOULD BE DISTINGUISHED AS SUCH AND DISCUSSED WITH THE GOI ON ITS OWN MERITS.

7. WE WOULD PROPOSE, THEREFORE, THAT THE EMBASSY MAKE THE FOLLOWING APPROACH TO THE ITALIAN AUTHORITIES:

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A. BY EXCHANGE OF LETTERS IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 1971 THE UNITED STATES AND ITALIAN NAVIES GAVE FORMAL STATUS TO THE PRESENCE IN NAPLES OF A UNITED STATES DESTROYER TENDER, A PRESENCE WHICH HAS IN FACT EXISTED FOR OVER TWENTY YEARS. IT IS THE STRONG DESIRE OF THE UNITED STATES TO CONTINUE TO USE NAPLES AS THE HOMEPORT, IN THE SENSE OF THE AGREEMENT, FOR THE DESTROYER TENDER DEPLOYED TO THE SIXTH FLEET.

B. ALTHOUGH THE SIXTH FLEET HAS BENEFITTED FROM THE ABILITY OF DESTROYER TENDERS TO DEPLOY TO THE MEDITERRANEAN FOR EXTENDED PERIODS WITH THE CREWS' FAMILIES LIVING IN NAPLES, OPERATIONAL AND LOGISTIC CONSIDERATIONS HAVE NOW LED THE NAVY TO CONCLUDE THAT

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IT WILL BE ABLE TO PROVIDE BETTER AND MORE FLEXIBLE SERVICE TO THE FLEET BY RETURNING TO THE CONCEPT OF ROTATING DESTROYER TENDERS. UNDER THIS CONCEPT THE FAMILIES OF THE CREWS WILL REMAIN IN THE UNITED STATES.

C. THEREFORE, WHEN USS PIEDMONT COMPLETES HER CURRENT TOUR IN JULY 1976, THE NAVY INTENDS REINSTITUTE THE PRACTICE OF ROTATING DESTROYER TENDERS TO THE MEDITER-RANEAN EVERY SIX MONTHS, WITHOUT DEPENDENTS.

D. MOST OF ABOUT 400 PIEDMONT DEPENDENTS WILL LEAVE THE NAPLES AREA WITH THE DEPARTURE OF THE SHIP.

E. THIS ACTION IS BEING TAKEN ON ITS OWN MERITS AND DOES NOT IMPLY OTHER CHANGES. NO CHANGES ARE ANTICIPATED IN THE SUPPORT OPERATIONS OF NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY NAPLES AS A RESULT OF THIS ACTION.

8. EMBASSY MAY DRAW ON PARAGRAPHS 2, 3, 4, AND 5 ABOVE IN DISCUSSIONS WITH ITALIAN AUTHORITIES TO ANSWER QUESTIONS AND DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE HOMEPORTING CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DESTROYER TENDER IN NAPLES AND THE SUBMARINE TENDER IN LA MADDELENA, IT WOULD SEEM BEST TO US TO IMPLEMENT THE CHANGE IN CONCEPT WITH AS LITTLE PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC DISCUSSION AS CIRCUMSTANCES WILL PERMIT.

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9. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO THE NAVY TO BE ABLE TO

RESOLVE THIS ISSUE WITH THE ITALIAN AUTHORITIES WITHIN THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS.

10. EMBASSY COMMENTS ON THIS APPROACH AND RECOMMENDATIONS AS TO TIMING ARE REQUESTED. INGERSOLL

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